

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

FY2012 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant Name: Montana Conservation Corps, Inc.	Application ID: 12AC133063
Program Name: Montana Conservation Corps	

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. This feedback is provided on a restricted basis and cannot be shared or distributed outside of your organization. We hope you will find this information helpful in completing applications to our future grant competitions. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of your application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

- The applicant presented community needs that are compelling, for example, the spread of invasive weeds which threaten forage for wildlife, the pine bark beetle infestations, as well as other threats to the environment. The plan for the recruitment, training, supervision, and use of the AmeriCorps members, was well outlined. The applicant presents an ambitious plan for all veteran Members to be provided chainsaw and wildfire training and at least 16 (80%) will obtain the S212 chainsaw certification and Basic Wildland Firefighter Certification which will increase their employability. The applicant also proposes to use a number of different instruments to measure community impact including: sign-in sheets, evaluation forms, Home Energy Conservation Tally Sheet, Home Assessment Questionnaire, community surveys, and visual evidence of improvements to the landscape. Overall, this is a very strong application.
- This application was very well developed in all areas, except for one problem area. The need was very well described with very convincing examples. However, the references for these examples were not clearly cited in a way that would give them credibility (names, dates, authors, etc.). The remainder of the application was very consistent with addressing the need. The Member tasks were appropriate, and the projected outcomes were very well defined with clear, measureable indicators. The description of the AmeriCorps members' experience reflected an opportunity for a very rewarding experience.
- There is strong and historical evidence to support the funding request for a large number of AmeriCorps members as evidenced by reference to economic indicators, and population information.
- The proposal details significant reasons for including a veteran component as identified by the state's veteran population, state unemployment data, and rural geography. Using current data to identify a special population of veterans, the proposal applied a proven crew model to improve employment opportunities while connecting veterans to services.
- The applicant was very clear on the number of AmeriCorps members requested, the need Members will fill and the measurable outcomes consistent with the continuation of a 1993 proposal based on an identified strategy of service and crews to grow a cadre of land stewards.

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- The AmeriCorps history in Montana is explained in detail and this application is consistent with earlier efforts to empower youth, engage young people, and cultivate partnerships.
- Recruitment is strong, varied by age and culture, and is inclusive. Multiple tools are used to promote the program and participant satisfaction is measured and results are incorporated in the program design.
- The applicant proposes a well-thought out project where Members will improve habitat to an at-risk landscape and provide weatherization to low income individuals in Montana while also engaging veteran volunteers to gain skills needed to transition to employment.
- The applicant demonstrates previous relevant success working to improve Montana trails, restoring public and tribal lands, and enhancing energy conservation and efficiency in homes. The applicant also has a successful history of mustering volunteers to address area needs.
- Applicant persuasively describes how they are the fulcrum for Montana communities and a resource for over 177 project partners.
- The application connected the various criteria with ease. Data and research was provided to justify the needs, intentionality was given to roles and responsibilities of Members, and the plan to engage veterans in wildfire mitigation was strong and purposeful.